

According to newspaper accounts, the group said a short prayer before they began their return trip. I quote him. He said, "Please grant us a safe trip. May God have his hand on this bus." That is what he prayed.

But prayers were not enough that day. At 10:55 p.m., as the bus neared the northern Kentucky town of Carrollton, the driver of the bus spotted a pickup truck barreling north in his southbound lane. Moments later a collision and the bus burst into flames.

Twenty-four children and 3 adults were killed in that devastating school-bus crash, and 30 more were injured. The lives of so many families and friends were destroyed.

The current president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Karolyn Nunnallee, lost her daughter Patty in that terrible crash. She was on television this morning trying to explain the impact of losing that child. This day across the Nation thousands of mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters will join in a moment of silence to honor those thousands of victims who die on our highways each year at the hands of drunk drivers.

We will honor Patty and the others who died that night and those who were injured during this moment of silence.

Sadly, the death toll visited upon us by drunk driving mounts up each year with an appalling clock-like efficiency. Every 30 minutes a family loses a loved one to a drunk driver. That means in the decade since the Carrollton crash 175,000 people have died. That is almost twice the population of the capital of my home State of New Jersey, Trenton, NJ. These deaths need not have happened.

If we also take into consideration that each of these victims had family and friends, we are talking about more than—more than—a million people grief stricken, which is more people than who live in Washington, DC. And this grieving should never have occurred.

Drunk driving also takes an enormous economic toll, as well, on our Nation. Alcohol-related crashes cost society over \$45 billion each year. One alcohol-related fatality is estimated to cost society about \$950,000; and an injury averages about \$20,000 in emergency and acute health care costs, long-term care and rehabilitation, police and court services, insurance, lost productivity, and social services.

Just look at this toll of needless death, needless grief, and needless spending. These facts should move us to rage. And our rage should move us to action.

Mr. President, we can act. Right now, the House-Senate conference committee is meeting to resolve the competing ISTEA reauthorization bills. I sit on that conference committee. As part of this process, the Congress is going to make one decision—will we get tougher on drunk driving and enact laws that will save lives or will we fall prey to the liquor and restaurant lobbyists?

Mr. President, this body has spoken about this issue. Two months ago, the Senate passed an amendment to prohibit open containers of alcohol in motor vehicles. It adopted a tough program to combat repeat offenders of drinking and driving. And by a 2 to 1 margin, the Senate voted to set a strict national drunk driving standard at .08 blood alcohol content. The Senate voted 62 to 32 for this life-saving measure. The House was not even able to vote on this issue. They were prevented from it.

We can ask the question, Why? But we must carry the will of the Senate—of the people—through to completion. We want ".08 in '98." We are now at the crossroads, and it is time to decide. The question comes up, Why? Why aren't the House Members permitted to vote on this issue? Well, it stops at a committee over there. The process is different than it is over here, and they do not even have to let a piece of legislation come up on the floor.

And why? Why would they say no to a vote on this issue when parents lose children and children lose parents across this country in numbers that compare to our worst year in Vietnam? In full combat we lost about 17,000 of our soldiers. In our country every year we lose more than 17,000 people to drunk driving, and it does not have the same impact on our society. So we have to say, Why is it that it does not?

If after coming so close we fail to enact .08 this year, the American people should charge this Congress with something I will call "VUI," voting under the influence of the liquor lobby. That is where it stops. They say, "You're going to kill our business," that "You're going to arrest social drinkers." No, no, no. We are not saying anybody can't drink. They can drink as much as they want. They can fall off the bar stools, as long as they don't fall on me or my kids.

The issue is whether, after having had a blood alcohol content level of .08, they ought to get behind a wheel. And we say no. I think the Senator from Ohio made it very clear. He said if he watched someone at a party or someone at a dinner, or something like that, have four drinks in an hour—a man my size would have five—on an empty stomach, to have your child get in the back seat of a car with that driver, I would say never, never. That is what we want to say across this country. Because every family is entitled to that kind of safety and security.

In 1984, President Reagan signed a bill that I wrote over here to make the national drinking age 21 and eliminate blood borders. Those are the borders between States with different drinking ages. Since then, more than 10,000 lives have been saved, enough to fill a small town. That is 10,000 families that did not have to mourn or grieve the loss of a child or a parent or a brother or a sister—10,000 people. That is a lot of people.

Now we have a different kind of blood border—the blood alcohol border. Right

now a driver legally drunk in one of 16 .08 States merely has to drive over the border and—poof—he is legally sober again. We know that is wrong. And we know once you are over .08 you are too drunk to drive in any State.

Consider this: Someone, again, of my height having had four glasses of wine in an hour—five glasses of wine; again, I am a little heavier than the average; five glasses of wine in an hour—on an empty stomach. That is too much. We are not saying, again, that people cannot drink. We are saying they cannot drink and drive.

Think about the 6,000 families who will be spared the devastating loss of a loved one to a drunk driver over the course of a decade if we pass .08. Think of what it means. Thousands of parents now destined to lose a child will be able to read their little ones to sleep instead of looking at an empty bed; children now destined to lose a parent will wake up in a full and loving home.

One year ago, Randy Frazier called the Congress to action. Randy's daughter, Ashley—people from Maryland—was killed by a .08 drunk driver. Randy said, "It is time for the leadership and action here in Congress to draw a safer, saner, and more sensible line against impaired driving at .08. If we truly believe in family values, then .08 ought to become the law of the land. Four beers in an hour"—four glasses of wine in an hour, on an empty stomach—"and getting behind the wheel of a car, in our estimation, is one definition of family violence."

Mr. President, it is decision time. The question is whether we are going to vote with our conscience. Are we going to vote under "VUI," voting under the influence of the alcohol lobby? They poured people into this town. The Restaurant Association had 130 as reported by a newspaper, 130 lobbyists come in. They swarmed all over the House, and they got people to change their minds. Then they got people, as I said earlier, to be able to hold that bill from getting consideration. That is not the way law ought to be decided when it comes to American families. And we hope we are going to stand up to our responsibility as we pause to honor the victims of drunk driving.

Let us be moved to action. We must enact tough drunk driving laws this year. It has to be ".08 in '98."

I yield the floor.

Mr. TORRICELLI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

#### EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to extend morning business for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, let me first thank Senator THURMOND and Senator LEVIN for their consideration.

I will not use all the time I have yielded myself.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE U.S. RELATIONSHIP WITH KUWAIT

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise on an issue of great importance to me, personally, and I believe many other Members of the Senate.

Winston Churchill once noted that nations whose sons fight and die together forever change their relationship. Seven years ago, the United States and Kuwait tragically shared this experience. The liberation of Kuwait forever changed the relationships between our two peoples. Though our cultures and the faiths of many are different, we share a sense of national independence and, I believe, a growing awareness of a burgeoning potential for democracy in Kuwait.

It was, therefore, extremely disturbing on November 19, 1997, when several members of the Islamic faction in Parliament in Kuwait sought the ouster of the Minister of Information, Sheikh Saud Al-Nasir Al-Sabah. It did so because of an allegation that he permitted books to be displayed at a book fair which fundamentalists deemed to be offensive. Members of this Senate—indeed, many people in the administration—not only know Sheikh Saud Al-Nasir Al-Sabah well, they consider him a friend. During the darkest days of the invasion and occupation of Kuwait, he was the voice of that Nation in the United States. We trusted him. More, perhaps, than anyone we know in Kuwaiti society, he rallied support to the liberation of his country.

These allegations against him we now recognize were little more than an effort by Islamic fundamentalists to extend their control over the Ministry of Information, which would have changed the nature of the political system in Kuwait. Judgments about Kuwait's future are for the Kuwaiti people, obviously, and entirely. But I believe as friends of that Nation who have fought and died with them, we all have a stake in the growing movement of that society for free expression.

I know my colleagues join me with some relief and considerable pride in that in a reformed Government following this incident, Sheikh Saud Al-Nasir Al-Sabah was kept as Oil Minister. Indeed, not only did he remain in the Government, therefore, but he received a promotion.

I know the people of Kuwait have been traumatized by this effort, through this emergence of Islamic factions within their political system, to extend their control and threaten rising elements of democracy in their society. I trust that Kuwaiti democracy will be the stronger for this experience, that the people of Kuwait will not only understand but appreciate the interests of the U.S. Senate in the political system of that country, since the concept of the government and free expression in Kuwait is so much a part of our mu-

tual understanding for the defense of that society.

I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 2057, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2057) to authorize appropriations for the fiscal year 1999 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personal strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

#### PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a list of staff that I send to the desk, be permitted the privilege of the floor during the pendency of the Department of Defense authorization bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The list of staff follows:

#### ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBERS

Les Brownlee, Staff Director  
George Lauffer, Deputy Staff Director  
Scott Stucky, General Counsel  
David Lyles, Minority Staff Director  
Peter Levine, Minority Counsel  
Charlie Abell  
John R. Barnes  
Stuart H. Cain  
Lucia Monica Chavez  
Christine E. Cowart  
Daniel J. Cox, Jr.  
Madelyn R. Creedon  
Richard D. DeBobes  
John DeCrosta  
Marie F. Dickinson  
Keaveny Donovan  
Shawn H. Edwards  
Jonathan L. Etherton  
Pamela L. Farrell  
Richard W. Fieldhouse  
Maria A. Finley  
Cristina W. Fiori  
Jan Gordon  
Creighton Greene  
Gary M. Hall  
Patrick "PT" Henry  
Larry J. Hoag  
Andrew W. Johnson  
Melinda M. Koutsoumpas  
Lawrence J. Lanzillotta  
Henry C. Leventis  
Paul M. Longworth  
Stephen L. Madey, Jr.  
Michael J. McCord  
J. Reeves McLeod  
John H. Miller  
Ann M. Mittermeyer  
Bert K. Mizusawa  
Cindy Pearson  
Sharen E. Reaves  
Sarah J. Ritch  
Moultrie D. Roberts  
Cord A. Sterling  
Eric H. Thoemmes

Roslyne D. Turner

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, today the Senate begins consideration of S-2057, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999. I want to thank all members of the Committee who have worked so hard this year to bring this bill to the floor. I particularly want to thank Senator LEVIN, the Ranking Member, for his cooperative support.

I also want to acknowledge the contributions of Senator COATS, Senator KEMPTHORNE, and Senator GLENN. This will be their last defense authorization bill. On behalf of the committee and the Senate, I want to thank them for their dedication to the national security of our country and their support for the young men and women who serve in our armed forces. We will miss these three outstanding Senators who have served our country and the committee so well.

Mr. President, I also want to express my appreciation to the members of the staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee. We on the Committee are very proud of our staff. I believe that we have the most competent and professional staff on Capitol Hill. They work well together in a very bipartisan way and all of us on the Committee are indebted to them for their selfless dedication. I ask unanimous consent that a list of the members of the staff be included following my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. THURMOND. This is the 40th defense authorization bill on which I have worked since I joined the Armed Services Committee in 1959. It is my fourth as Chairman of the committee and as I indicated earlier this year, while I intend to remain on the Committee, this will be my last year as Chairman. I look forward to the floor debate on this bill as well as the conference with the House. I am hopeful that we are able to complete the bill and send it to the President before the July 4th recess. It is essential that we complete floor action before the Memorial Day recess in order to meet this ambitious schedule.

We have accelerated significantly our process this year. I cannot recall ever bringing the defense authorization bill to the floor this early in the year. If we are successful in completing conference in late June, we may be setting a modern day record.

Mr. President, the Defense Authorization bill for Fiscal Year 1999 which I bring before the Senate today is only 3.1 percent of Gross Domestic Product—the lowest since 1940. Defense outlays peaked in 1986 at 6.5 percent. President Reagan's defense buildup was one of the great investments in our history. As a result of President Reagan's strong leadership and our strengthened military, we won the Cold War. Therefore, we have been able to reduce our defense force structure. These reductions enabled the Nation to reduce the